



November

Charging Times

A Newsletter for the Mabry Middle School Chargers
Sponsored by the Mabry Middle School PTSA



2006

A Message from our PTSA Co-Presidents:

It is hard to believe that it is already November. The year is flying by! Your PTSA has been quite busy. In October, our **Community Outreach** held a school supply drive for our sister school Brown Elementary. Teresa Shank was able to deliver a wide variety of greatly needed supplies to the school. We received a wonderful thank you from Brown Elementary School's counselor, Andrea Sullivan. Thank you to all that sent in donations. We then celebrated **Red Ribbon Week**. All students were given bands to show support against drugs. On Wednesday, we had a wonderful guest speaker from the DEA, Mr. Harry Thornton. Mr. Thornton spent all day at our school speaking to all the grade levels about the effects of drugs, alcohol, and substance abuse. The kids appeared to be very receptive to the presentation. Then on October 26th, our wonderful Academic Committee hosted a reception for all new students inducted into the **Junior National Honor Society**. Congratulations to all of the new inductees! Also that day, the students had an opportunity to attend the **Fall Dance** which was held in the school cafeteria after school. A DJ spun all the current music and handed out prizes. Great fun was had by all. Your PTSA Executive Board and Mabry Administrators have also been busy reviewing **mini-grant applications** and have sent out 30 letters of approval for grants.

We have many more events to come: 1st Academic Reception November 14, General PTSA Meeting December 7, Staff/Teacher Holiday Appreciation December 19, and Block Parties December 21. Please watch for information regarding these and other events on the PTSA blog on <http://www.mabryonline.org>, in our newsletters, or in emails for our Volunteers at Large. If you would like to become a Volunteer at Large, please contact our Vice President of Volunteers, Diana Young, at dyoung6@comcast.net.

Hope everyone has a nice holiday break!

Becky Johnson and Belinda Heitmeyer, Mabry PTSA Co-Presidents

Mabry Book Fair Success Brings Great Rewards!

Thank you so much Mabry for making this year's book fair a huge success! Thanks to all of you and your purchasing power we had a sales total of \$7,474 which is fantastic! This enabled our media specialist, Gail Hendrix to pick out a total of \$1,100 worth of books for the media center as well as receive a \$150 voucher to be used through Scholastic. The PTA will also receive an additional \$1,742 in cash profit. Just think about it, **you buy books for your children to read, and with the profits we are able to buy more books for the kids as well as help fund teachers' requests for special projects in the classrooms. How awesome is that!** Thanks to you, our children will certainly benefit from your generosity more than once!

We want to also thank all of our wonderful volunteers who so generously gave of their time to work at the fair. Without you, we wouldn't be able to have this opportunity at our school. You're an awesome group of parents and Donna and I have enjoyed working with you over the years.

With that being said, we would like to introduce the next in line to take over the co-chair positions for the book fair beginning this spring. They are Mary Ciesielski, Jean Kahn, and Vicki Gunnells. Thanks so much for stepping up and helping our kids!

Thank you Mabry for all you do!

Donna Miller and Lisa Krzyzewsk, Book Fair Co-Chairs

Reflections Winners

Mabry Middle School PTSA is proud to announce that we had 144 entries in our Reflections competition. Thank you to **The Art Place** staff and **KnowledgePoints**, our Partner in Education, for judging all of our entries. With so many talented students and outstanding entries, the judges had a very difficult time selecting the winners!

The following are the winners for Literature, Visual Arts, and Photography:

Literature	Visual Arts	Photography
<p><u>6th grade</u></p> <p>1st place Tayllor Hastings 2nd place Renee Puvvada 3rd place Matt Power Honorable Mention Melissa McKinney</p> <p><u>7th grade</u></p> <p>1st place Tyler Molinaro 2nd place Alexandra Lilly 3rd place Samantha Bayer Honorable Mention Julie Saxton</p> <p><u>8th grade</u></p> <p>1st place Barbara Rogers 2nd place Connor Plumley</p>	<p><u>6th grade</u></p> <p>1st place Hunter Moore 2nd place Robbie Corner 3rd place Alesis Honohan</p> <p><u>7th grade</u></p> <p>1st place Mary Kathryn Harrington 2nd place Jeff Anderson 3rd place Hannah Lentjes</p> <p><u>8th grade</u></p> <p>1st place Margaret Olivia Harris 2nd place Connor Plumley 3rd place Stephen Gorbachov</p>	<p><u>6th grade</u></p> <p>1st place Haley Raby 2nd place Ryan Holt 3rd place Kaitlyn Keegan</p> <p><u>7th grade</u></p> <p>1st place Derrick Crabb 2nd place Derrick Crabb</p> <p>There were no entries for Music Composition, Dance Choreography, and Film/Video Production. We encourage our students to consider getting involved in those categories next year.</p>

Everyone who submitted an entry was put into a drawing for a \$25 Target gift certificate. **The winners of our participation drawings are: Drew Manning** for the Literature category, **Olivia Harris** for Visual Arts, and **Katie Keegan** for Photography.

Wendy Sullivan, Reflections Chair

Community Outreach and Brown Elementary Say “Thanks!”

Thanks to your tremendous kindness and generosity, our **first outreach project** of the 2006 – 2007 school year was a **huge success!** Our sister school, **Brown Elementary**, had specifically requested certain school and clinic supplies based on their most immediate needs and you, our Mabry community, responded enthusiastically by donating approximately 85 packages of notebook paper, 100 composition books, 56 boxes of crayons, 34 boxes of tissues, 40 pairs of scissors, 60 glue sticks, 28 backpacks, literally thousands of pencils, and the list goes on.

The following message sent by the counselor at Brown says it all: “All of us at Brown want to extend our deepest appreciation and gratitude for your generosity. [Your Mabry PTSA representatives] just delivered a huge amount of school and clinic supplies to our school and our teachers are thrilled. Many of our families do not have the means to purchase these essential supplies on a regular basis and your gift eases the burdens on many of our parents. Once again, please accept our thanks and know that you have brightened the day for so many children.”

In the **spring**, Community Outreach will be having a “**sporting and camping equipment**” drive to help provide for a local not-for-profit summer sports camp for under privileged children. Until then, please consider holding on to any “useable” sporting goods you may be thinking of throwing out.

Thank you!

Teresa Shank, Community Outreach Chair

School Attendance Policy The 411 from your School Social Worker

School Social Workers are assigned the task of enforcing the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law. If a student's attendance does not improve with interventions from the teacher and school principal, a referral to the School Social Worker will be made. Together, with the school, we work with students and their families to alleviate the situations that have lead to the excessive absences. The following provisions apply to absences during the entire academic year.

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|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Five Excused Absences | The teacher will contact the parent or guardian. If contact is unsuccessful, then a letter or postcard will be sent. |
| Five Unexcused Absences | After two reasonable attempts to notify the parent, guardian, or other person who has control or charge of a child, without response, the school will send a notice to the parent, guardian, or other person by certified mail, return receipt requested. |
| Ten Excused or Unexcused Absences | A letter will be sent from a school administrator to the parent or guardian regarding attendance. In addition, an administrator will confer with a School Social Worker to determine whether a referral is warranted, at this time. |
| Fifteen Excused or Unexcused Absences | A referral will be made to the School Social Worker. |

For more information about the School Social Work program, please visit
<http://www.cobbk12.org/~socialwork>

Box Tops for Education - Contest Coming Soon !!!

Thanks to all of you who have been turning in your box tops so far this year. We already have over 1500 box tops collected, and will be receiving a check for \$320 in December.

For those of you that are not familiar with the program, it's an easy way to earn money for Mabry. Simply clip the Box Tops for Education coupons off of the qualifying General Mills, Pillsbury, and Ziploc products, then drop your box tops in the bin in the front office or in the cafeteria. A list of qualifying products can be found at the box tops website: www.boxtops4education.com.

**Make sure you save all of your box tops because we'll be having a contest after the winter break!
Check the next Charging Times (in January) for details about the contest.**

If you have any questions, please call Karen Lind at 770-594-7369.

The Mabry Middle School Student Directory was distributed to students in October.

If you did not order a Directory but would like to purchase one now, there are a few remaining copies available for purchase (\$5.00) in the Mabry School Store, open every morning before school.

Thank you to everyone who turned in your Directory information, especially to those parents who turned it in on Charger Day!



NEW PTSA Member Benefit 20% Discount Card at Party City

Party City has partnered with Georgia PTA to offer a new Member Benefit, a 20% off Party City discount card. The card can be used as often as you like and will have no restrictions or minimums. PTA members must register for the discount cards. Directions for registering will be posted soon on the Georgia PTA website under Member Benefits.



PARENT INVOLVEMENT IS CRITICAL TO MIDDLE SCHOOL SUCCESS

(And it's not just about volunteering!)

Adapted for publication with permission of Georgia PTA

It has been well known for years that parent involvement increases student success. Nevertheless, **research shows parent involvement peaks during the elementary school years and drops off substantially as students move through middle and high school. This is unfortunate because the life-altering physical, psychological, and social changes that students experience during these adolescent years make parent involvement all the more important to both students and parents.**

Contrary to popular belief, parent involvement is not defined by the number of volunteers a school has, nor by the number of hours volunteers work. Rather, parent involvement is defined by six standards – each contributing to the success of a student.

1. Communication

- ◆ **Take advantage of every opportunity to meet face-to-face with school staff**, whether it is at PTSA meetings, School Council meetings, parent-teacher conferences, or other school events (even social events). Make it a priority to be there. In-person opportunities build familiar, trusting relationships – something very difficult to do with email and phone calls.
- ◆ **Set up appointments with teachers and staff when a concern or issue arises.** Remember, it is easier to solve big problems when they are still little, so don't wait to talk until a little problem grows bigger.
- ◆ **Use iParent with your student to keep track of assignment and test grades.** No report card should have any surprises on it. Identifying problem areas early on by reviewing work and grades can help the student turn things around. This resource is also a great opportunity for praising good work.
- ◆ **Phone the front office to speak to a staff member on urgent concerns, but use email for all else.** Staff email addresses follow an easy format based on the first and last name of the staff member: `firstname.lastname@cobbk12.org`.
- ◆ **Check with your student daily for any communications** from teachers, staff or the PTSA and respond promptly. Many teachers complain that parents do not return papers in a timely manner, but much depends on you getting the paperwork from your student in the first place. Take care of paperwork as soon as you get it or write down deadlines on your calendar; this prevents misplaced or forgotten papers.
- ◆ **Continually refer to our school website, www.Mabryonline.org, for the latest news and information. Be sure to check it at least weekly to stay in touch with what is happening at Mabry Middle School!**

2. Parenting

It takes a whole new set of skills and understanding to be a middle school parent. People always find it hard to believe what “good kids from good homes” will do. In fact, it is not uncommon for parents to have blinders on when it comes to their children. As evidence, consider a recent Atlanta Journal Constitution article on teen substance use that showed that parents believed that their teen's use and access to alcohol and drugs was much lower than what their own students reported to exist.

To be prepared for anything when it comes your way during these difficult years, **take advantage of every opportunity to learn what you need to know as a middle school parent, so you can deal with student health, safety, and education issues before they become urgent problems!** This includes capitalizing on the many sources parents have for learning offered by National and Georgia PTA, local organizations, and our own Mabry PTSA.

3. Student Learning

Talk to your child about what is going on at school, in their classes, with homework and projects, extracurricular activities. Car time is often an easy time to chat with your kids about important issues.

- ◆ **Listening is much more important at this stage than telling your teen what to do.** Be supportive and positive in your communications. Logical reasoning takes on a whole new dimension with the developing teen brain. Listen to their version of an argument. Raising your voice at any time shuts down a child's ability to hear what you are saying, so keep the conversation going using the “indoor” voice you reminded your student to use all throughout elementary school.

- ◆ **Help your student stay organized with homework and projects.** Even the most organized students can change drastically when their brains and bodies go into chaos mode during the middle school years. Work together to achieve a healthy balance of schoolwork, diverse extracurricular and social activities, as well as free time.
- ◆ **Start exploring and defining with your students their career interests.** With your student, school staff, working together you can plan to make your student's post-high school dreams come true.
- ◆ **Use every opportunity to relate what your students are learning to real life.** Students are motivated to excel in even the most "boring" subjects when they see how their learning helps them in the real world. No matter the curriculum, try to relate to how it applies to life in the real world, your job, home activities, current events, etc. In fact, research shows that lack of meaningful schoolwork is one of the main reasons students drop out of high school.

4. *Volunteering*

Mabry Middle School has many, many opportunities for parents to get involved. Many parents think volunteering changes or isn't needed as much in middle school, but we need you just as much as ever! Parent involvement in school activities is critical to the success of our school and to the success of you kids in middle school. Even when you think your kids don't ever want to see you at school ☺, they'll be proud of your involvement and will benefit from the connection you have maintained in their school experience.

5. *School Decision-making and Advocacy*

A healthy, happy, safe, and well-educated adult doesn't just happen. Raising children is a series of decisions, each of which should be made with enough information to make a good decision. When it comes to your student's education it is important to stay informed and contribute to the success of our schools by actively contributing to decisions. Here are some ideas:

- ◆ **Attend open meetings on school issues and election forums.** Our elected school board, state and federal legislators make laws and policies that affect the quality of education our students receive with every decision they make. Stay informed on the issues, candidates' qualifications and views, then hold them accountable for performance after they are elected! Make your voice heard at every opportunity!
- ◆ **Support your local school council.** Every school in Georgia is required to have a council of school administrators and elected representatives of parents, teachers, and business leaders. The council's mission is to address academic achievement issues at schools. Bring up issues you want addressed with your parent representative or bring the issue up yourself at a school council meeting.

6. *Community Collaboration*

Learning doesn't happen just at school or home – our community is full of great learning opportunities, whether they are academic, athletic, social, spiritual, cultural or creative.

- ◆ Pick a family philanthropy to support financially and as volunteers.
- ◆ Explore the various resources in your community that can help your student develop as a student and as a safe, healthy, happy adult. Museums, cooking classes, recreational areas, houses of worship, clubs etc., all have something positively enriching that can help facilitate a healthy relationship with your student if you look for one that you can enjoy together.

As individuals, we often set standards for our own personal goals, whether with respect to careers, health, community involvement, or personal interests. Consider adopting these standards as part of your personal parenting goals. By doing so, you'll find that your life, and that of your middle schooler, will be enriched in many ways, including academically!

The next **Charging Times** will be distributed with students' Report Cards on **Friday, January 12th**.
The deadline for submitting articles for this newsletter is **Thursday, December 15th**.

Please email articles to sspallen@aol.com or fill out a Newsletter Request Form, available in the Mabry front office.

Mabry Middle School Calendar *

DECEMBER	2		Band All-State Auditions – Awtrey M.S.
	5		6 th Grade Band Concert
	6		Early Release
	7		Winter Orchestra Concert
	12		7 th / 8 th grade Band Concert and PTSA General Meeting
	13		PTSA Holiday Brunch
	14		Academic Reception
	14		Holiday Choral Concert for 6 th Grade
	15		Deadline for next (1/12) <u>Charging Times</u> Newsletter
	16		8 th Grade Band Camp with Lassiter High School
	19		Staff Appreciation
	21		End of the 2 nd 9wk period, Block Parties
	22-31		NO SCHOOL - Winter Holidays
JANUARY	1-4		NO SCHOOL - Winter Holidays
	5		NO SCHOOL – Teacher Workday
	8		BACK TO SCHOOL
	8	8:30 am	PTSA Executive Board Meeting (Media Center)
	8	9:30 am	PTSA Committee Chair Meeting (Media Center)
	12		Distribution of Report Cards, <u>Charging Times</u>
	13		All State Orchestra Auditions
	15		NO SCHOOL – MLK Holiday
	17		8 th Grade Writing Test
	18		8 th Grade Band Concert
	19-20		All-State Chorus Rehearsal
	20		Final All-State Band Auditions (Macon, GA)
	22		7 th Grade Performance Series Testing
	23		Reflections Reception
	24-25		8 th Grade Band Trip to Savannah
	26	7:30-9:30 pm	Mabry Sports-A-Rama Night
30		Academic Reception for 2 nd 9 wks Achievement	
FEBRUARY	5	12:45 pm	Lassiter Presentation to 8 th grade Students (at Mabry)
	5	6:30 pm	7 th grade Parent Meeting for Jekyll Island Trip
	8		End of 3 rd 4.5 wk period
	8	6:30 pm	Lassiter Open House and Curriculum Fair for all 8th grade (Rising 9 th grade) parents <u>and</u> students
	12	8:30 am	PTSA Executive Board Meeting (Media Center)
	12	9:30 am	PTSA Committee Chair Meeting (Media Center)
	12		Honor Orchestra Auditions
	14		Distribution of Progress Reports, <u>Charging Times</u>
	15		8 th Grade Parent Meeting at Lassiter
	16		School Council Meeting
	19		NO SCHOOL – Presidents' Day
	20		NO SCHOOL – Teacher Workday
	23		Rising 9 th graders' registration materials due to Lassiter
24		Honor Band Auditions (at Mabry)	

* Updated 11/14/2006. These dates are subject to change.



***Have a fun and safe Winter Break!
Happy Holidays!***

